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ABSTRACT

This chapter, taken from a guide to designing, implementing, and evaluating instruction and services for students with disabilities, addresses the issue of teacher collaboration. It provides information about the nature of teacher collaboration, its role in relation to special education service delivery as well as other school trends, its advantages and disadvantages, its costs, and suggestions for fostering it. A list of 10 ways to create time for collaboration is provided. The chapter is designed to be independent of specific models for establishing programs that emphasize teacher collaboration. Rather, it is intended to act as a set of principles that can guide administrators in the design, implementation, and maintenance of models tailored to meet local needs. (Contains 36 references.) (JDD)

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ED 372 540

Chapter 14

Educational Leadership for Teacher Collaboration

Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend

INTRODUCTION

Most of the emerging approaches to delivering services to students with disabilities stress the importance of teacher collaboration (Friend & Cook, 1992; Morsink, Chase-Thomas, & Correa, 1991). At the same time, others have noted that significant challenges exist to such collaboration (Idol & West, 1991; Phillips & McCullough, 1990; Pugach & Johnson, 1990). This chapter provides administrators with basic information about the nature of teacher collaboration, its role in relation to current special education service delivery as well as other school trends, its advantages and disadvantages, and suggestions for fostering it. The information provided in this chapter does not depend on specific models for establishing programs that emphasize teacher collaboration. Rather, it is intended to act as a set of principles that can guide administrators in the design, implementation, and maintenance of models tailored to meet local needs.

The following questions will guide the discussion:

1. **What is teacher collaboration, and how does it relate to other current school practices?**
2. **How does teacher collaboration relate to special education service delivery?**
3. **What are the benefits and costs of fostering collaboration among teachers?**
4. **How can administrators plan for and implement programs and services that foster collaboration among teachers?**

1. WHAT IS TEACHER COLLABORATION, AND HOW DOES IT RELATE TO OTHER CURRENT SCHOOL PRACTICES?

A Definition

When teachers say that they collaborate, they may mean many different things. Sometimes they may be referring to working together in a classroom to instruct a group of students that includes students with disabilities. At other times they may be

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describing meetings they attend to discuss students who are transferring to the school. They may also be reporting on the efforts of the school's staff development committee or any other situation in which they work closely with other teachers.

The use of the word *collaboration* may lead to confusion because it refers to *how* teachers are carrying out a specific task or activity, not the nature or purpose of the activity. Friend and Cook's (1992) definition of collaboration is intentionally general and takes this into account: "Interpersonal collaboration is a style of direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (p. 5). They clarify this definition by detailing several defining characteristics. The following characteristics can be used to further describe teacher collaboration:

- *It is voluntary*. Teachers may be required to work in close proximity, but they cannot be required to collaborate. They must make a personal choice to work collaboratively in such situations. Because collaboration is voluntary, not administratively mandated, teachers often form close, but informal, collaborative partnerships with colleagues.

- *It is based on parity*. Teachers who collaborate must believe that all individuals' contributions are valued equally. The amount and nature of particular teachers' contributions may vary greatly, but the teachers recognize that what they offer is integral to the collaborative effort.

- *It requires a shared goal*. Teachers collaborate only when they share a goal. If they are working on poorly defined goals, they may be unintentionally working on different goals. When this happens, miscommunication and frustration often occur instead of collaboration.

- *It includes shared responsibility for key decisions*. Although teachers may divide their labor when engaged in collaborative activities, each one is an equal partner in making the fundamental decisions about the activities they are undertaking. This shared responsibility reinforces the sense of parity that exists among the teachers.

- *It includes shared accountability for outcomes*. This characteristic follows directly from shared responsibility. That is, if teachers share key decisions, they must also share accountability for the results of their decisions, whether those results are positive or negative.

- *It is based on shared resources*. Each teacher participating in a collaborative effort contributes some type of resource. This has the effect of increasing commitment and reinforcing each professional's sense of parity. Resources may include time, expertise, space, equipment, or any other such assets.

- *It has emergent properties*. Collaboration is based on belief in the value of shared decision making, trust, and respect among participants. However, while some degree of these elements is needed at the outset of collaborative activities, they do not have to be central characteristics of a new collaborative relationship. As teachers become more experienced with collaboration, their relationships will be characterized by the trust and respect that grow within successful collaborative relationships.

Teacher Collaboration in Current School Practices

Many trends in schools are encouraging teacher collaboration. For example, peer coaching (Joyce & Showers, 1988) and interdisciplinary curriculum development (Brandt, 1991) are premised on teachers' collaborative relationships, as are current trends in the design and delivery of professional development programs (Barth, 1990). Many aspects of currently recommended school reforms call for greater collaboration among teachers (Goodlad, 1984). The trend toward school-based decision making is also consonant with the recognition that collaboration is becoming an essential ingredient in successful schools. Smith and Scott (1990) have asserted that the collaborative school is easier to describe than define. Such a school, they suggest, is a composite of beliefs and practices characterized by the following elements:

- The belief, based on effective schools research, that the quality of education is largely determined by what happens at the school site.

- The conviction, also supported by research findings, that instruction is most effective in a school environment characterized by norms of collegiality and continuous improvement.

- The belief that teachers are professionals who should be given the responsibility for the instructional process and held accountable for its outcomes.

- The use of a wide range of practices and structures that enable administrators and teachers to work together on school improvement.

- The involvement of teachers in decisions about school goals and the means for achieving them (p. 2).

Administrators often find that their discussions of collaboration focus on sharing authority with teachers and involving teachers in school decisions. While these are important aspects of school collaboration, it is teachers working together for the purpose of improving their teaching that distinguishes a truly collaborative school from a school that is simply managed in a democratic fashion. Little (1982) found that more effective schools could be differentiated from less effective schools by the degree of teacher collegiality, or collaboration, they practiced. She observed that

collegiality is the existence of four specific behaviors. First, teachers talk frequently, continuously, and concretely about the practice of teaching. Second, they observe each others' teaching frequently and offer constructive feedback and critiques. Third, they work together to plan, design, evaluate, and prepare instructional materials and curriculum. Finally, they teach each other about the practice of teaching. As Cook and Friend (1991b) have noted, collaboration appears to be the unifying theme that will characterize many of the new developments in the successful schools of the 1990s.

Recognizing that collaboration refers to the professional working relationship among teachers establishes a fundamental understanding for leadership personnel who want to foster teacher collaboration. When creating structures that rely on collaboration, at least two sets of issues must be addressed. The first concerns the quality and integrity of the intervention, activity, or program that is being executed collaboratively. The second concerns the knowledge, skills, and readiness of teachers to work collaboratively. The former topic is the focus of the next section. The latter is addressed in the final section on developing collaborative structures and services.

2. HOW DOES TEACHER COLLABORATION RELATE TO SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY?

Teacher collaboration as it relates to special education services should not be considered in isolation from other aspects of a collaborative school. With educational improvement for all students as the overriding goal of collaborative schools (Smith & Scott, 1990), teacher collaboration regarding students with disabilities should be just another aspect of a school's collaborative ethic and an integral part of the school culture.

Applications of Collaborative Principles

Collaboration cannot exist by itself. It can only occur when it is associated with some program or activity that is based on the shared goals of the individuals involved. An examination of applications in which teachers work collaboratively is appropriate. Depending upon their shared programmatic goals, educators can work together in many diverse ways to deliver services to students. Laycock, Gable, and Korinek (1991) have described several alternative formats or configurations that facilitate collaborative efforts to deliver educational services. The following sections consider applications of collaboration that may be used for improving the delivery of educational services to all students, including those with disabilities.

Co-Teaching. Co-teaching is becoming a viable approach for instruction in many school situations. For example, in some high schools history and English teachers are co-teaching classes that combine their subject matter into a course called American Studies. Similarly, in middle schools, teams of teachers are meeting

regularly to discuss instructional issues and to monitor student progress. Many teachers, regardless of level, contact colleagues to engage in shared classroom activities either formally or informally.

This service delivery approach is also receiving increasing attention as a means of integrating students with disabilities into general education classes. In co-teaching designed for this purpose, two teachers -- one a general education teacher and the other a special education teacher -- work primarily in a single classroom to deliver instruction to a heterogeneous group of students including students with disabilities.

Many different types of co-teaching may occur (Adams, Cessna, Stein, & Friend, 1992; Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989; Friend & Cook, 1992). The following are several common approaches:

- *One teach, one observe or assist*. In this type of co-teaching, both teachers are present, but one -- often the general education teacher -- takes a clear lead in the classroom while the other gathers observational data on students or "drifts" around the room assisting students during instruction. This approach is simple; it requires little planning on the part of the teachers, and it provides the additional assistance that can make a heterogeneous class successful. However, it also has serious liabilities. If the same teacher consistently observes or assists, that teacher may feel like a glorified aide and the students may have trouble responding to him or her as a real teacher. If this approach is followed, the teachers should alternate roles regularly.

- *Station teaching*. In this approach, the teachers divide the content to be delivered and each takes responsibility for part of it. In a classroom where station teaching is used, some of the students may be completing independent work assignments or participating in peer tutoring. Although this approach requires that the teachers share responsibility for planning sufficiently to divide the instructional content, each has separate responsibility for delivering instruction. Students benefit from the lower teacher-pupil ratio, and students with disabilities may be integrated into a group instead of being singled out. Furthermore, because with this approach each teacher instructs each part of the class, the equal status of both students and teachers is maximized. One drawback to station teaching is that the noise and activity level may be unacceptable to some teachers.

- *Parallel teaching*. The primary purpose of this type of co-teaching is to lower the student-teacher ratio. In parallel teaching, the teachers plan the instruction jointly, but each delivers it to half of the class group. This approach requires that the teachers coordinate their efforts so that the students receive essentially the same instruction. This type of co-teaching is often appropriate for drill and practice activities, projects needing close

teacher supervision, and test review. As with station teaching approaches, noise and activity levels may need to be monitored.

- *Alternative teaching*. Sometimes students with special learning needs benefit from preteaching or reteaching of the instructional content. In this approach to co-teaching, one teacher works with a small group of students to preteach or reteach while the other instructs the large group. This approach can also be used to ensure that all students in a class receive opportunities to interact with a teacher in a small group. The greatest risk in this model is stigmatizing students with disabilities by repeatedly grouping them for this purpose. This risk can be avoided by varying groupings, including groups for enrichment, and ensuring that all students are periodically included in a group.

- *Team teaching*. In team teaching, both teachers share the instruction of students. The teachers may take turns leading a discussion, one may speak while the other demonstrates a concept, one may speak while the other models note taking on the chalkboard, and so on. Teachers may role play, simulate conflict, and model appropriate question asking. This approach requires the highest level of mutual trust and the most commitment. It is an approach that some co-teachers may never enjoy. On the other hand, many veteran co-teachers report that this is the type of co-teaching they find most rewarding.

Some of these approaches require close collaboration (e.g., team teaching) while others do not (e.g., one teaching while the other observes or assists). For all the approaches, Redditt (1991) has offered the following important points to keep in mind:

- All members of the school community (i.e., teachers, administrators, parents) must understand that a co-taught class is not a duplication of effort or a waste of one teacher; the two teachers are accomplishing together what neither could do alone.

- Co-teaching is not for everyone. Some teachers simply will be too uncomfortable with a colleague present in the teaching situation to perform effectively.

- Co-teachers must be both flexible and committed to the co-teaching process. For co-teaching to be successful, each teacher gives up a little and gains a great deal.

- Scheduling is one of the greatest challenges in co-teaching. Teachers not only need a shared time to teach (whether on a daily, weekly, or occasional

basis), they also need time to plan instruction, especially for the models in which more coordination between the teachers is needed.

White and White (1992) have also noted that selection of students, parent notification, staff training, and program evaluation are essential components of co-teaching. They have suggested that care be taken so that individual classrooms have a manageable mix of students and that parents receive a full explanation of the goals and instructional approaches used in a co-taught class. According to White and White, teachers should have the opportunity to learn about co-teaching options prior to beginning their own efforts. Finally, schools designing co-teaching programs should systematically gather the information that will make the program accountable.

Teams. Another school application of collaboration is teaming. Although much of the information presented in the following paragraphs could apply to any type of team, the emphasis will be on two types in particular: prereferral teams and multidisciplinary teams.

Prereferral Teams. *Prereferral team* is a term used to refer to all the team approaches that address students' academic and behavior problems prior to any consideration for special education eligibility. Some teams consist of only teachers, while some include others who can assist in assessing student difficulties and supporting teachers. On all such teams, the procedures used are generally consistent with those of the prereferral intervention system proposed by Graden, Casey, and Bonstrom (1985):

- *Stage 1: Request for consultation*. In this stage the teacher requests assistance for a student, sometimes through an informal contact with an individual who functions as a consultant and sometimes through presentation of student concerns at a team meeting.

- *Stage 2: Consultation*. During this stage, strategies to address the problems raised by the student's teacher are suggested and systematically implemented. Generally, the teacher has the primary responsibility for most of the strategies.

- *Stage 3: Observation*. Feedback on the strategies being implemented is sought to determine their effectiveness; alternative strategies may also be suggested. On some teams, Stages 2 and 3 are combined.

- *Stage 4: Conference*. At this stage, the team meets to consider the information gathered. The team may decide to continue or adapt interventions, determine that a full assessment is needed, or determine that no additional intervention is warranted.

If the team recommends referral for full assessment to determine eligibility for special education, the team process is extended and involves a multidisciplinary team.

There is some debate about the membership and scope of prereferral teams. Some argue that no specialists should be on the team to avoid creating the impression that the team is just the first step in a referral to special education. Others argue that eliminating these specialists prevent the team from using their specialized expertise. Phillips and McCullough (1990; 1992) have suggested two types of members: core and auxiliary. In this approach, general educators serve on all cases and are designated as core members. Other personnel, who serve on a case-by-case basis, are identified as auxiliary members.

Another debate that occurs on teams concerns "how much is enough." On some teams, the outcomes of simple classroom modifications (e.g., calling the parents, changing the student's seat, conferring with the student) are considered an adequate basis on which to determine whether or not full assessment is needed. On other teams, interventions include systematically implemented approaches that may last several weeks. The specific ways in which teams should function can best be determined locally and in concert with local and state policies, as long as the characteristics of effective teams outlined later in this section are fostered.

Multidisciplinary Teams. A multidisciplinary team is the group of professionals, including teachers, that meets to determine eligibility of students for special education, decide appropriate placement, and monitor student progress. This is the type of team mandated by P.L. 94-142, (the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act of 1974), and it is the type of team on which virtually all professionals who work with students with disabilities serve.

Multidisciplinary teams by definition include the diverse professionals needed to determine a student's need for special education. Sometimes this type of team may have only a few members (e.g., school psychologist, special education teacher, classroom teacher, administrator, parent, student), but in other cases the team may also include other specialists (e.g., speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, adaptive physical educator, school nurse, and/or social worker). Including all professionals related to the case on the team improves decision making (Reynolds, Gutkin, Elliott, & Witt, 1984).

A multidisciplinary team generally has three purposes. First, the team is convened to determine a student's eligibility for special education. In carrying out this purpose, team members complete assessments of the student, share their results, and jointly decide whether or not the student meets the criteria established for special services. Second, the team considers the most appropriate placement for the student. This decision must occur after the determination of eligibility and should be based on the needs of the student. The third purpose for the multidisciplinary team is to monitor the student's progress after placement in special education. Specifically,

every 3 years the team must reassess the student and reconsider his or her special education services.

Multidisciplinary teams have probably been the most carefully scrutinized of all school teams, since this is the only type of team mandated in P.L. 94-142. Criticisms of multidisciplinary teams include lack of systematic approaches to gathering data, minimal parent and classroom teacher input, and lack of use of a systematic decision-making approach (Kaiser & Woodman, 1985; Pfeiffer, 1981).

Fostering Collaboration on Teams. Many professionals have offered observations on optimizing team functioning in schools (Male, 1991; Moore, Fifield, Spira, & Scarlato, 1989). Either explicitly or implicitly, their ideas suggest that effective teams are those in which collaboration is nurtured. The following are especially important characteristics of teams:

- *Team goals are clear*. Clear, explicit goals are required for collaboration, and so it is logical that precise goals are characteristic of all collaborative teams. What is difficult to convey is how essential goals are. Many teams assume they are working on the same goals when in fact some team members may have alternative goals. For example, on a prereferral team, the teacher who has brought the student to the team's attention may believe that the goal is to get the student assessed to determine eligibility for special education. The reading specialist on the team may concur with this goal. Other team members, however, may believe their goal is to help the teacher manage the student's learning difficulties without additional assessment. In this example, the referring teacher may view the team as nonresponsive while other team members may view the teacher as unwilling to try alternatives. Such goal conflicts should be articulated and resolved. If they are not, a "we" versus "they" mindset may develop.

- *Team member needs are met*. Teachers on teams should perceive that, overall, their team participation is rewarding, not frustrating, and that they are respected and valued team members. This aspect of effective teams relates to the parity characteristic of collaboration. In practice, making time to ensure that team members' needs are met can be problematic. Since teams in schools often work under severe time constraints, they are highly task focused. Sometimes, however, time is well spent on discussing team members' perceptions of the team and their role on it. Especially for teams with several new members, such sharing can foster understanding and result in greater perceived team value.

- *Team members have identified roles and responsibilities*. Just as on a sports team where all members know what positions they play and what is expected of them during a game, school team members should understand what their contribution to the team is expected to be and should be

accountable for making that contribution. This aspect of teams highlights the coexistence of individual accountability for specific responsibilities and the interdependence of team functioning. By knowing their responsibilities, team members are more likely to feel obligated to carry them out (as opposed to situations in which "something" needs to be done by "someone"). At the same time, this increases their recognition that everyone else is counting on them and that the team cannot be effective without each member's contribution. This characteristic of team functioning is an application of the parity, shared decision making, and shared accountability components of collaboration. Figure 1 provides one example of a team record-keeping chart that highlights clarified responsibilities.

- *Teams have procedures that foster leadership and participation*. Nurturing parity on a team does not mean that teams function most effectively without leadership. In fact, on many struggling teams one problem is a lack of leadership. Each team needs someone to move meetings along, focus attention on the agenda, facilitate discussion, and monitor participation. This leadership role does not have to be assigned in a particular way, nor does it have to be assumed by a particular team member, but it is essential to team functioning. On most effective teams, the leadership role is shared. That is, the role of facilitator may rotate among members, and when a need arises any member is willing to take on the leadership role.

Shared Problem Solving. A third application of collaboration is shared problem solving. Problem solving occurs when special education teachers and classroom teachers meet with each other to address concerns about students or instruction. Problem solving may be as informal as the meeting that results when one teacher says to another, "Have you noticed that Joe is beginning to spend a lot of time daydreaming? I'd like to talk about what might be happening and bounce a few ideas around on how to handle it." It may also be a more formally established procedure that a special education and a classroom teacher go through when they meet regularly to discuss the progress of a shared student. Because problem solving is the central process teachers engage in as they interact to improve instructional practice, skills in shared problem solving may be the most critical for all teachers to acquire.

Many problem-solving models have appeared in the professional literature (Conoley & Conoley, 1982; Jayanthi & Friend, 1992; Phillips & McCullough, 1992; VanGundy, 1988). In general, most models encompass the following steps:

1. *Preparation for problem solving*. For interpersonal problem solving to be effective, participants should check with one another to be sure that they agree on the purpose of the problem solving and to confirm that they are willing to participate.

Figure 1

Responsibility Chart for Interpersonal Problem Solving

Date	Task	Person(s) Responsible	Planned Completion Date	Outcomes	Notes

2. *Identification of the problem*. Although this step is self-explanatory, it is often mistakenly assumed to be the simplest and quickest of the problem-solving steps. It is, in fact, the most difficult to complete. Problem solvers often misidentify the primary problem, and they may not take enough time to discuss, clarify, and resolve differences in their perceptions of the problem. When this occurs, the subsequent steps are wasted in trying to solve an incorrectly identified problem.

3. *Generation of alternative solutions*. Once the problem is identified, problem solvers then generate multiple and diverse alternatives for addressing it. Although it is hot the only strategy, brainstorming is often used during this step. The greatest challenge is to avoid evaluating alternatives as they are proposed, since this interferes with the production of additional alternatives.

4. *Evaluation of possible solutions*. After several options have been generated, the list should be shortened by considering the positive and negative aspects of each solution. This should also include predicting the tasks that would have to be completed to carry out each possible option. This task analysis should lead to the reduction of the list to just two or three potential alternatives.

5. *Selection of solution and detailed planning*. The final decision on a solution may be based on past experiences, available data, knowledge of the student, and/or feasibility. Once an option is selected, detailed plans should be made, with individual responsibility assigned to ensure that the solution is implemented with integrity and clarity. Also during this step, a time is set to evaluate the effectiveness of the solution.

6. *Evaluation of selected solution*. During this final step of the problem-solving process, problem solvers meet to determine whether or not the solution is effective and the next steps to take. If successful, the intervention may be continued or, in some cases, discontinued. Sometimes adaptations to the solution are needed to make it more effective or feasible. Occasionally, solutions are not successful and the problem solvers then decide whether to try another previously considered alternative or to begin the problem-solving process again.

Perhaps the single most important suggestion to help teachers make shared problem solving effective is to follow the steps in the process systematically. Frequently, teachers claim that they are problem solving when in actuality they are simply trying to convince each other about the "rightness" of their own ideas. Sometimes teachers generate a single idea for an identified problem and then proceed to discuss it in detail, either praising it as the only option possible or deriding it to the point that it is left out of consideration. Neither is appropriate. Implementing

the problem-solving steps consumes valuable time, but time invested in systematically following the steps eliminates having to repeat the entire process later.

3. WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND COSTS OF FOSTERING COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS?

When reading about the possibilities that collaboration provides for professionals to form productive working partnerships, it is tempting to see collaboration as a panacea for a broad array of educational issues. Conversely, if administrators begin calculating the costs of collaboration in terms of staff time, they may decide it is not worth the effort before even piloting a collaborative project. As one teacher reported, "We were going to do teams to support students in our school. As we began planning, people realized how much time they would have to contribute. We quit before we even started." Clearly, the costs and benefits of collaboration are serious considerations. In this section, a sketch of typical costs and benefits is provided in the hope that it will lead to balanced decision making.

Benefits of Collaboration for Schools

One of the most promising benefits of teacher collaboration is the increased opportunities it gives teachers to interact with one another regarding instructional issues (Barth, 1990; Idol & West, 1991). Specifically, teachers who collaborate are more likely to discuss with their colleagues areas of the curriculum they have difficulty teaching. They are also likely to obtain ideas and feedback from their peers to help solve these instructional dilemmas. As a result, teachers learn skills from one another that they can then use in their classes (Meyers, Glezheiser, & Yelich, 1991). As more school staff members participate in collaborative efforts, a ripple effect of shared knowledge and skills may spread through the school (White & White, 1992).

A related schoolwide benefit to collaboration is increased teacher sensitivity to each others' roles and responsibilities. In some schools it is common to hear professionals suggesting that their jobs are the most difficult in the school while others have less burdensome assignments. These conversations often include special education teachers. When collaboration is fostered, however, the ongoing communication tends to increase awareness that every professional in school is working diligently and that everyone has difficult tasks to do (Meyers et al., 1991). When this understanding is combined with sharing of knowledge and skills, teachers perceive that they are supported in their work (Cook, 1992).

Collaboration has a direct impact on students, too. For one thing, they receive the benefits of instruction planned by two teachers. It is quite likely that the combined efforts of the teachers are more powerful than any plans that could have been developed by a single teacher. In addition, teachers are modeling collaborative behavior for students, whether it is through co-teaching in the classroom or by

participating as members of a school team. A middle school student captured the wonderful understanding that only children are capable of when he said about the team, "Oh, yeah. The teachers meet at least once a week to talk about us kids. You know, it's like L.A. Law -- those lawyers find out what's going on when they have those meetings. The teachers find out what's going on with all us kids in their meetings."

Another type of benefit accrues to students from collaboration. When teachers are working closely together, they gain perspective about student learning and behavior problems and a better understanding of which students need specialized assistance and which might benefit from more intensive interventions within general education. In fact, in many schools in which collaboration is stressed, the number of referrals to special education decreases and the proportion of students determined to be eligible for special services once assessed becomes appropriately very high.

Finally, a collaborative ethic in schools (Phillips & McCullough, 1990) is consistent with the major direction in school programming and human services, as well as societal trends in business and industry (Cook & Friend, 1991b). The emphasis on collaboration in organizations has developed to improve the quality of products and services as well as the morale and career satisfaction of the individuals within the organizations. Improved educational outcomes and increased professional retention and career satisfaction are certainly appropriate goals.

Benefits of Collaboration for Special and General Educators

The benefits of collaboration for schools generally hold true for the collaborative efforts among special education and general education teachers. In addition, the following positive effects may be experienced:

- Increased contact between special and general education teachers decreases their sense of isolation and improves their understanding of each others' programs and services. This understanding of each others' roles, responsibilities, and approaches helps to develop a framework upon which a collaborative ethic can be built.

- Stigmatization of students with disabilities can be reduced. Collaboration is often associated with programs in which students with disabilities spend an increased amount of time in mainstream settings. In these situtations, effective teacher collaboration helps to ensure that the special needs of a student are not highlighted unnecessarily and that the student is accommodated within the classroom context.

- Collaboration is essential when assisting students with disabilities to make the transition from a more restrictive to a less restrictive environment. For example, a student who had been receiving services in a self-contained

special education class and who is going to receive services in a resource program next year will probably have fewer difficulties in the transition if teachers work closely to plan the change.

- Many students who are not eligible for special education services benefit when teachers collaborate. Depending on the approach used by the collaborating teachers, some students with special needs who are not eligible for special education services may occasionally be grouped for instruction with students with disabilities and thus benefit from specially designed instruction delivered in the general education classroom. At the very least, the knowledge and skills that special education and general education teachers learn from one another can be applied to other students.

- Program integrity for students with disabilities may be enhanced. As teachers share instructional goals, plan and deliver instruction, and jointly monitor student progress, students with disabilities may receive instruction that is less fragmented. For example, if teachers have ongoing contact, skills that might be taught outside a general education classroom can be related to those being presented in that class.

Costs of Collaboration

If collaboration had only benefits, everyone would be participating in collaborative efforts. However, this is not occurring. Undoubtedly, the costs of collaboration are a significant consideration for educators.

If all the school districts in the country that are emphasizing collaboration were to ask teachers what the primary barrier is to teacher collaboration, the answer would be "time." Time has been highlighted in numerous reports about collaboration (e.g., Cook & Friend, 1991a; Idol & West, 1991; Redditt, 1991). In some schools, collaboration becomes so important that significant time is taken from pupil instruction. In others, the lack of adequate time leads to hasty problem solving and unsuccessful "quick fix" ideas. In yet others, the absence of time prevents teachers from employing many of the more sophisticated co-teaching approaches available. Although there is no ideal response to the problem of not having adequate time to collaborate, schools are beginning to find creative ways to make time within busy schedules. A sample of these innovative solutions to a chronic dilemma is presented in Figure 2.

A second major cost of collaboration arises from the need to prepare teachers for collaborative approaches. A dilemma many schools encounter is this: When collaboration is first discussed, perhaps in a teachers' meeting or at an Administrative Council session, professionals look at one another and say, "So? It's all just common sense." However, as Benjamin Franklin so aptly noted, "Common sense isn't." The point is, even though many teachers are intuitively skilled at working collaboratively, the demands of ongoing professional collaboration often require sophisticated skills

Figure 2

Ten Ways to Create Time for Collaboration

These are just a few of the ways in which schools are making time for collaboration. This list illustrates how innovative strategies can assist in solving the time dilemma.

1. Implement a peer tutoring program across two classes; students assist each other while one of the two teachers is released to work with a colleague.

2. Ask a local business to sponsor a substitute teacher for a specified number of days during the school year. Employ the substitute teacher to provide release time for teachers.

3. Work with the Parent Teacher Organization to plan and implement a "volunteer substitute teacher" program in which qualified substitute teachers donate their time to the school to release teachers.

4. When assemblies or other large-group student activities are scheduled, release a few teachers to work together. Supervision of the students for which they are responsible is managed by other staff.

5. Revise the school schedule to provide shared planning time to the teachers who most work together.

6. Initiate bi-weekly student activity periods in which community volunteers and some teachers instruct students on specialized topics while other teachers have release time to meet with colleagues.

7. Add early release days to the school calendar.

8. Have professionals in the school who do not have assigned class groups (e.g., principal, social worker, counselor) plan and deliver instructionally relevant activities while teachers have release time for planning.

9. Use at least part of any professional development days in the calendar for planning for collaboration.

10. Release teachers who have extensive responsibilities for collaboration from other school duties (e.g., lunchroom supervision).

for communication and conflict resolution that teachers may never have needed before. They may also need information on how to run efficient meetings, how to listen, and how to manage resistance. Without adequate time to develop these skills, time to discuss instructional philosophies, and so on, collaboration is unlikely to be sustained. Thus, staff preparation costs should figure significantly in decisions to promote collaboration.

A third cost of fostering collaboration is the threat it may pose for teachers who are most comfortable with an isolated approach to education (Friend & Cook, 1992). The traditional culture of schools has rewarded teachers who were satisfied with working alone and receiving few benefits and little input from others. As collaboration is considered, teachers who are comfortable with traditional schools may find collaboration frightening. They may fear that they do not have a significant contribution to make; they may be concerned that the personal cost in terms of time is too dear; or they may worry that others will be evaluating their skills (Cook & Friend, 1990). Administrators who would like to foster teacher collaboration are likely to need to devote considerable attention to this matter.

Another cost of collaboration is the possibility of increased conflict among teachers. When the adults in schools work more closely with one another, it is more likely that their differences will emerge (along with their similarities). Many teachers are uncomfortable with conflict; they may find it awkward and may prefer to avoid tackling issues instead of participating in a conflict (Friend & Cook, 1992). However, conflict could just as easily be placed on the list of benefits of collaboration, since conflict indicates that professionals are sharing real ideas with conviction.

4. HOW CAN ADMINISTRATORS PLAN FOR AND IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT FOSTER COLLABORATION AMONG TEACHERS?

A number of the other chapters in this text provide valuable suggestions related to program planning. The process of planning and implementing collaboration is the same or highly similar to the processes used for other types of programs. In this section, only the aspects of program planning that seem to have particular relevance to teacher collaboration are highlighted.

Use Systematic Program Planning Steps

Programs and services that emphasize teacher collaboration are somewhat unique in that they focus attention on the *behaviors and attitudes of the adults* involved in instructing students. For that reason, they may be viewed by some teachers as threatening. It is particularly important, then, that the steps for program planning be implemented systematically. This enables all involved to feel ownership in the collaborative program and provides opportunities for them to become accustomed to the demands of collaborative programs and services. Friend and Cook (1992)

have suggested the program planning steps that are outlined briefly in the list that follows. Readers are referred to this and other sources if more detailed planning information is needed (see, for example, Cook & Friend, 1990; Hall & Hord, 1987; Loucks-Horsley & Hergert, 1985).

1. *Determine goals and initial structures*. In this step, teachers should clearly identify the purpose and goals of the collaborative effort and tentatively outline the structures through which the goals could be reached. This initial step is especially critical, since the remaining planning steps are premised on mutually agreed upon goals. Although it is tempting to complete this step rapidly, administrators are well advised to proceed slowly at this juncture. The difficulties associated with problem solving when problems are poorly defined were noted earlier. The same difficulties arise when co-workers invest in planning to reach goals that are ill defined.

2. *Plan for implementation*. Once goals and structures are outlined, the next step involves planning what will be needed in order to make the program or service a reality. Often this step includes identifying resources needed for the program or service, noting all barriers that might prevent implementation (e.g., schedule conflicts, teacher reluctance, parent concerns) and generating strategies for overcoming these barriers. At the same time, this step includes listing all of the existing resources that might assist in implementing the program or service (e.g., availability of teacher minigrants for innovative projects; adoption of a new curriculum that will require teachers to work together) and how those resources might best be accessed. A final major part of this step is beginning to identify the ways in which the program or service will be evaluated.

3. *Prepare for implementation*. The purpose of this step is to begin to overcome the barriers identified and to access the resources outlined in Step 2. It also involves completing detailed plans and designing specifications for the program or service. Often, this is the point at which others perceive that the program or service is likely to be implemented. For this reason, this step often causes teachers who might not have been actively participating to become more involved. Additional barriers or resources may be noted during this phase, and they should be addressed. This step also involves many pragmatic tasks: Parents should be informed of the planned program or service; materials should be ordered if they are needed; teachers should receive initial professional development related to the collaborative effort; and specific evaluation plans should be finalized.

4. *Implement the program*. When the program or service reaches this step, it is often piloted by a volunteer group of teachers. This pilot phase enables teachers to resolve minor problems prior to widespread implementation, and it provides an opportunity for teachers who are somewhat reluctant about

the program or service to concretely observe how it operates. Evaluation data are gathered from the time that implementation begins so that needed modifications can be made.

5. *Maintain the program*. Once a program has been implemented, it is easy to assume that it will immediately become self-sustaining. This is particularly true when participants have contributed a tremendous amount of time and effort to make the program or service successful, implementation seems to be occurring with few problems, and other projects and priorities are beginning to compete for everyone's attention. Even successful programs should be monitored and periodically assessed to determine their status. For example, teachers who are new to the school should be provided with information about the program. In addition, program results should be examined, and parents should regularly be asked for their input.

The steps just outlined may seem very detailed, and some readers may question their necessity. However, experience has repeatedly demonstrated that it is well worth the effort to follow these steps carefully when planning a program or service that emphasizes collaboration. If this is done, the program reaches full implementation far more rapidly and smoothly than if the steps had not been followed. Conversely, when steps are not completed, we have found that either the project is abandoned before full implementation is reached or enormous amounts of time are required to resolve problems that could have been avoided.

Distinguish the Program or Service from the Collaborative Requirement

In the beginning of this chapter it was stressed that collaboration is *how* adults work together, whereas a program or service is *what* they are doing. This is mentioned again as a program planning topic because it is a critical concept. Teachers need to plan what the program or service will look like (e.g., a peer tutoring program, a co-teaching service, a weekly team meeting), but they also need to prepare for the requirement of working together (Gable, Friend, Laycock, & Hendrickson, 1990).

Use Effective Leadership Strategies to Foster Participation

One of the most frequent observations made by those working with groups of teachers to design, implement, or evaluate collaborative programs or services concurs with Barth's (1984) position that administrators need to both model desirable traits and to foster and encourage those behaviors in others. The following are examples of ways in which this can be done:

- *Provide incentives to participating teachers*. Arrange for substitute teachers so that the participants can be released for planning or evaluation activities. Encourage participants to attend professional meetings, and to find "seed

money" that participants can use to purchase materials or other needed supplies. On the other hand, access to such resources should be restricted for teachers who refuse to participate.

- *Help teachers set priorities*. In many schools, teachers feel inundated by change. They feel that no sooner do they begin to implement one new program or service than someone insists that they begin another. As a result, many teachers feel as though they are being pulled apart. Teachers need to be involved in the decision making regarding implementing new programs and services, and sometimes the best answer to yet another innovative idea is a polite "No."

- *Set a standard, but allow teachers to grow toward it*. Even though collaboration is voluntary, it can be a standard for programs in a school. Teachers need to know if this is the expectation so that they can learn about it and refine their skills for it. If collaboration is the standard, after a period of time it should be expected of all teachers and should be reflected in their performance reviews. Teachers who do not want to work collaboratively should not be considered to be performing their professional responsibilities adequately, and new teachers should be explicitly notified that collaboration is part of the school culture that is reflected in their performance evaluations.

- *Provide professional development opportunities*. One strategy for making it clear that collaboration is a standard is to provide opportunities for teachers to learn about collaboration and practice the skills that facilitate collaborative working relationships. Teachers repeatedly comment that they have not been prepared to interact with colleagues on an ongoing basis. Even teachers who have worked on collaborative projects for a lengthy period of time note how valuable it is to refresh their knowledge of the requirements of collaboration and practice the related skills.

- *Be present*. Administrators should be actively involved in the planning and implementation of collaborative programs and services. In this way they provide a model for collaboration (Barth, 1984). They enact it by joining with teachers and others to improve school conditions. This enables them to be knowledgeable about the projects and informed about potential barriers and opportunities.

- *Seek and value a wide range of input*. For collaborative programs and services to succeed in the long run, the input of all stakeholders is needed. These stakeholders include not only those who initially support the proposal, but also those who question its value. Supporters and opponents both make contributions that are important in program planning and implementation (Cook & Friend, 1990).

SUMMARY

Collaboration is an exciting vehicle through which teachers can plan and carry out an array of services for students with disabilities as well as for other students. Establishing a strong collaborative ethic in a school has the additional benefit of enhancing teacher morale and providing teachers with a support network. However, fostering collaboration requires patience and careful attention to many details. By managing it carefully, administrators can ensure that collaboration becomes a foundation for their school communities.

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